

REMARKS

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-23 are pending. Claims 1, 4, 7, 11, and 17 are amended, and claims 21-23 are added. Claims 1, 4, and 11 are independent. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner states that claims 4-6 are allowed, and that claims 9, 10, 14-16, 19, and 20 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Applicant appreciates the Examiner's indication of allowed/allowable subject matter. In response, independent claims 1 and 11 are amended herein to recite a novel combination of elements not suggested by the reference cited by the Examiner.

Therefore, independent claims 1 and 11 are in condition for allowance.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and § 103(a)

Claims 1, 3-7, 8, 11, 13, 17 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by AAPA shown as FIGS. 6 and 7;

claims 1, 3-7, 8, 11, 13, 17 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA shown as FIGS. 6 and 7, in view of Tsukahara et al. (U.S. 4,735,275), and

claims 2 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA FIGS. 6 and 7 in view of Tsukahara et al. and JP09-207855.

These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Amendments to Independent Claims 1 and 11

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, independent claim 1 has been amended to recite a combination of elements in a steering shaft support structure, including *inter alia*

left and right pipes composing said body frame, each being formed in an L-shape, and each being provided with an arcuate portion at an upper-most portion thereof,

a cross beam being placed in spanning relation between the upper-most portions of the left and right pipes, the cross beam having a first arcuate portion formed on a center portion thereof.

In addition, independent claim 11 has been amended to recite a combination of elements in a steering shaft support structure, including *inter alia*

wherein the cross beam is mounted on upward arching bent portions of the left and right supports.

Support for the above novel features can be seen, for example, in FIGS. 3-5.

The Applicant respectfully submits that the combination of elements as set forth in each of independent claims 1 and 11 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including AAPA FIGS. 6 and 7 and Tsukahara et al.

In contrast to the presently claimed invention, FIGS. 6 and 7 which show prior arts, merely disclosed a fragmentary portion 116 of the body frame with two forward projecting nuts 116, to which arc shaped rear holder 114 is attached.

In other words, the rear holder 114 is merely attached to a front face of the frame portion 116, and is not placed in spanning relation between “arcuate-shaped, upper-most portions of the left and right pipes” (as recited in claim 1), or “mounted on upward arching bent portions of the left and right supports” (as recited in claim 11). Further, as described in paragraph [0009] of the present application, the AAPA shows a steering bracket 102, which, in the present invention is replaced by parts of the body frame. Thus, the present invention reduces the number of components as compared to the AAPA.

In addition, as can be seen in Tsukahara et al. FIGS. 4 and 5, this document merely discloses a supporting pipe 7 for a steering head pipe and a reinforcing pipe 8 both positioned rearward of the upper-most portions and bent portions of main pipes M. Thus, Tsukahara et al. also fails to disclose the combination of elements set forth in each of independent claims 1 and 11.

At least for the reasons explained above, the Applicant respectfully submits that the combination of elements as set forth in each of independent claims 1 and 11 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including AAPA FIGS. 6 and 7 and Tsukahara et al.

Therefore, independent claims 1 and 11 are in condition for allowance.

Dependent Claims

The Examiner will note that dependent claims 21-23 have been added.

All dependent claims are in condition for allowance due to their dependency from allowable independent claims, or due to the additional novel features set forth therein.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and §103(a) are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject claims, but merely to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

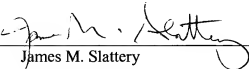
If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 208-4030 (direct line).

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By


James M. Slattery
Reg. No. 28,380
P. O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000

JMS/CTT/jmb 